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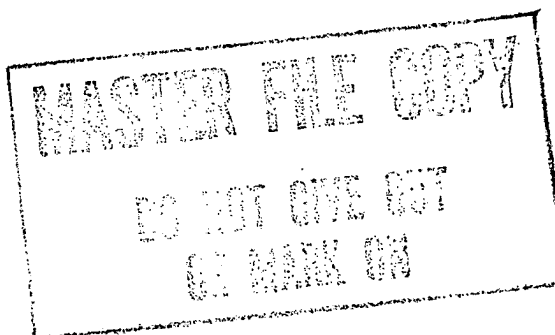
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South Africa: The Role of the State Security Council in Decisionmaking

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A Research Paper



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ALA 84-10086
OCR 84-14078
August 1984

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South Africa: The Role of the State Security Council in Decisionmaking

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A Research Paper

This paper was prepared by [] Office
of African and Latin American Analysis, and []
[] Office of Central Reference, and was
coordinated with the Directorate of Operations. []

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Comments and queries are welcome and may be
directed to the Chief, Southern Africa Branch, ALA,
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South Africa: The Role of the State Security Council in Decisionmaking

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 1 July 1984
was used in this report.*

The State Security Council—a nine-member Cabinet committee headed by Prime Minister P. W. Botha—is the single most important forum for developing South Africa's foreign and defense policies. Decisions of the Council have ranged from approving the nonaggression pact with Mozambique and the disengagement of forces agreement with Angola to authorizing specific military operations. The Council oversees all foreign intelligence activities and plays a key role in setting and coordinating policy on internal security issues even at the local level.

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The majority of members of the Council are civilian members of Parliament who belong to the governing National Party and are political allies of the Prime Minister. Key figures include Minister of Foreign Affairs Pik Botha, Minister of Justice Coetsee, and Minister of Law and Order Le Grange. The military is represented by Minister of Defense General Malan and Defense Force commander Viljoen, and military officers play key roles in the management of the group's supporting committees. In our judgment, however, it is the civilians who predominate in the Council and set the overall direction of South Africa's policies.

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The military, nevertheless, has increased its influence under P. W. Botha, and military leaders have important roles in national security decisionmaking. Although some recent decisions of the Council have not been popular with the military—such as the decision to withdraw South African forces from southern Angola—we believe that the differences between the military leadership and National Party officials center on the means by which to maintain the security of white-ruled South Africa and not on basic policy goals.

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We do not expect major changes in the decisionmaking structure while Botha serves as chief executive. The system has served him well by promoting consensus and ensuring coordination. The policies that emanated from the Council have proved popular among Afrikaners and English speakers alike, indirectly benefiting Botha's program of limited constitutional reform.

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The new Constitution that comes into force this fall, which abandons the parliamentary system and establishes a strong executive as a separate branch of government, will centralize decisionmaking even more as the authority of the legislature is further reduced. One principal implication of the new government structure is that the State Security Council will continue to have a critical role, with even less oversight by the legislature.

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South Africa's national security management system represents a mixed blessing. The strengthened executive control of policymaking and greater flexibility in the process have permitted Pretoria to change policies toward Mozambique and Angola earlier this year, but it could also allow Botha to revert rapidly to a more aggressive regional policy should he and the State Security Council perceive that South Africa's security interests have been jeopardized. [REDACTED]

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Contents

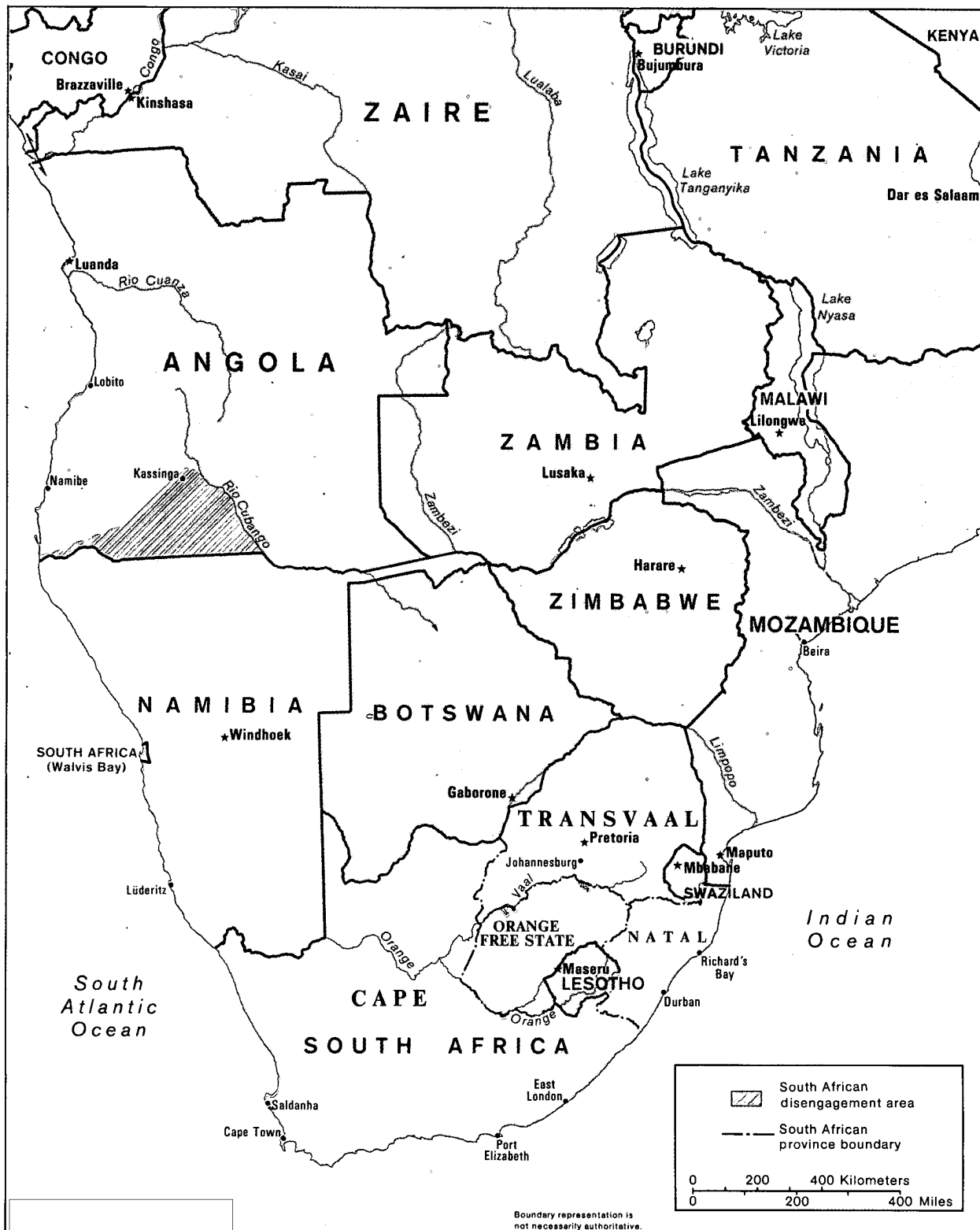
	<i>Page</i>
Key Judgments	v
Introduction	1
Centralization of Authority	1
State Security Council	1
Functions	1
Organization	4
The Role of the Military	10
Outlook and Implications	12

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Southern Africa



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South Africa: The Role of the State Security Council in Decisionmaking

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Introduction

The usual intelligence problems associated with determining how national security decisions are made are compounded in the case of South Africa, where the inner workings of the decisionmaking system are shrouded in greater secrecy than is usual for a non-Communist society. This secrecy grows out of the Afrikaners' well-developed sense of isolation. Nevertheless, our assessment of top-level deliberations in Pretoria over the past few years makes it clear that the State Security Council (SSC) has become an increasingly important forum in which the Prime Minister and his closest advisers air options and decide policy on issues of national importance. In addition, the SSC system—the array of interdependent committees and their associated staffs—has become a critical tool by which Botha implements decisions.

Centralization of Authority

P. W. Botha became Prime Minister in 1978 and moved quickly to tighten and modernize what had been a chaotic and highly personalized system. Within 12 months, Botha consolidated his hold on government and centralized decisionmaking by:

- Reducing the number of government departments from 39 to 20.
- Cutting the number of Cabinet committees from 20 to four, both to consolidate his personal control and, according to US Embassy reporting, to limit the power of Conservatives who had dominated the Cabinet since the National Party came to power in 1948.
- Vastly expanding the duties and authority of the office of the prime minister, which by the end of 1981 had grown from under 50 to more than 300 civil servants, academics, and military staff officers.

In the national security area, Botha moved to depersonalize the system and revitalized the State Security Council. The Council had been established as a Cabinet committee by act of Parliament in 1972 with responsibility for "security and intelligence." It languished under Botha's predecessor, Prime Minister B. J. Vorster, however, who had concentrated mostly on domestic matters and had given his friend, General van den Bergh, then head of South Africa's civilian intelligence service, wide responsibilities for developing and implementing foreign policy. During the 12 years Vorster served as Prime Minister, van den Bergh usurped many of the prerogatives of the ministries of defense, foreign affairs, and justice.

We believe Botha relies on a wide circle of advisers, some of whom serve on the State Security Council. From reporting from Afrikaner journalists and academics, it appears likely that Botha values the advice of Afrikaner academics, businessmen, and clergymen on domestic security and economic issues. Botha's close relationship with military leaders is also well documented in US Embassy and defense attache reporting, as well as his ties to senior National Party politicians from Cape Province. We believe that, although these people have influence on the Prime Minister, he relies on the State Security Council to formulate and coordinate national security policy.

State Security Council

Functions

Although the State Security Council is one of four Cabinet committees, it is considered by most analysts of South Africa to be first among equals. It is the only one established by law and the only one headed by the Prime Minister. The SSC membership includes the Prime Minister; the senior Cabinet minister; the

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ministers of foreign affairs, justice, law and order, and defense, the commissioner of the South African Police; the commanding general of the defense forces, and the director of the civilian intelligence services. A recent study of the SSC by an Afrikaner academic states that the ministers of labor, transport, and finance, as well as the senior civil servants in the departments of justice and foreign affairs may be called upon to participate as nonvoting members when their expertise is required. [REDACTED]

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The Council's responsibilities are exceptionally broad. They range from strategic decisions on the overall direction of South African foreign policy to tactical decisions on specific covert military operations. The evidence [REDACTED] shows that the State Security Council also has a key role in formulating and coordinating policy on internal security issues.

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[REDACTED] the involvement of the SSC in a central way in virtually every significant policy decision over the past four years:

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- A senior official of the Office of the Prime Minister told US diplomats in 1982 that all option papers dealing with Namibian policy were drafted in the SSC, and that it was the Council and not the Department of Foreign Affairs that had primary responsibility for formulating policy on Namibia.

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**Composition of the State Security Council
Political Policymakers***P. W. Botha, Chairman ^a**Prime Minister**Piet Koornhof ^a**Minister of Cooperation and Development**(Senior Cabinet Minister)**Pik Botha ^a**Minister of Foreign Affairs**H. J. Coetsee ^a**Minister of Justice**Louis LeGrange ^a**Minister of Law and Order***Military***General Malan ^a**Minister of Defense**General Viljoen**Commander of Defense Force***Security and Intelligence***P. J. Coetzee**Commissioner of Police**Niel Barnard, Director**National Intelligence Service* ^a National Party Member of Parliament

- South Africa's shift from confrontation and toward rapprochement with Mozambique earlier this year and its pursuit of a disengagement of forces agreement with Angola were approved by the SSC, according to public statements by senior Cabinet ministers.
- Regarding a major domestic security issue, a senior adviser to the Minister of Interior told US diplomats in mid-1983 that the SSC had decided not to ban—probably to avoid adverse international publicity—the United Democratic Front, an alliance of 200 black organizations that opposes the new Constitution because it grants limited political rights to Coloreds and Asians but not blacks.
- The Council also directs coordination between the police and the military on domestic security issues. In June 1980, a Counterinsurgency Committee was created under the aegis of the SSC to coordinate counterinsurgency and counterterrorist efforts.

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Organization

The Council has a network of subordinate supporting committees, which maintain close liaison with the military, police, and governmental bureaucracies. This structure filters the flow of paper, a process designed to promote the movement of key intelligence and ideas to the top.

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Working Committee. The senior committee of the Council is the Working Committee, which is chaired by the Director of the National Intelligence Service and is composed of senior military, police, and intelligence officers, as well as civil servants, according to defense attache reporting. A South African military staff officer told US Embassy officials that the Working Committee meets every two weeks, generally two days before the SSC meetings.

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Reporting on the Working Committee is scant, but a recent academic study concludes that the Committee serves the State Security Council by reviewing domestic and regional security issues before full SSC consideration. We believe that the Working Committee in effect acts as a "final filter" between the security bureaucracy and the SSC's political decision makers.

Secretariat. The Secretariat serves as the staff of the SSC. It is headed by Lt. Gen. Andries Jacobus van Deventer, a military staff officer. According to reporting from the US Embassy and the defense attache office, the Secretariat is staffed by military, intelligence, and police officers, as well as bureaucrats

seconded by several other ministries. The deputy director of the Secretariat—who is also a general officer—told the defense attache in April 1984 that only 17 percent of the staff of the Secretariat was composed of military officers. Both the Embassy and defense attache believe, however, that military officers play a role out of proportion to their numbers in managing the Secretariat.

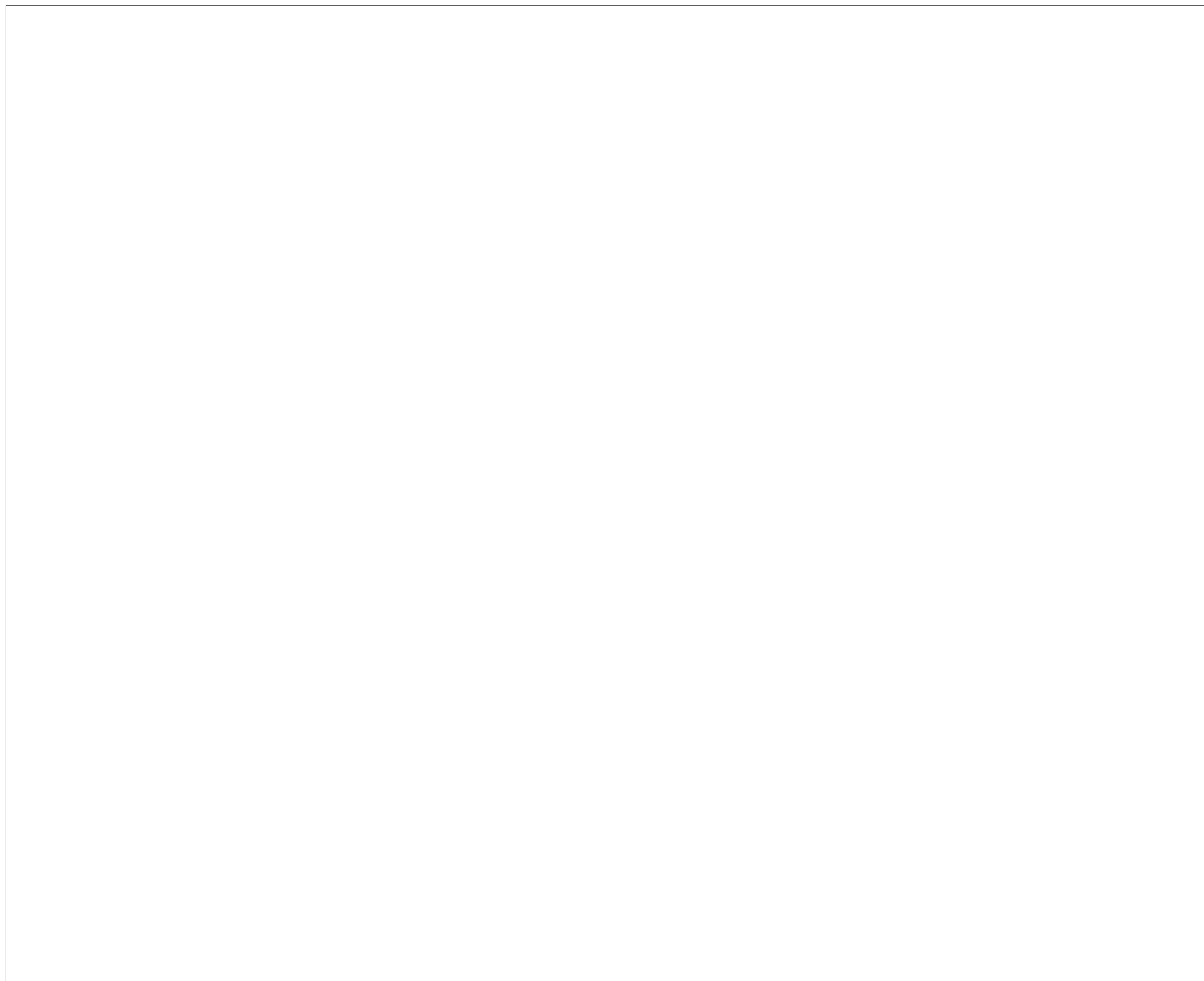
According to defense attache reporting, the Secretariat has four branches, which assist the Council in formulating political, military, and economic policies

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for achieving national security objectives, coordinating the execution of the national strategies, determining intelligence requirements and priorities, and providing administrative support to the SSC:

- The Total Strategy Branch, [redacted]



[redacted] considers various political and military responses to strategic issues, and drafts decision memorandums.

- The National Interpretation Branch produces intelligence estimates based on data and analysis provided by the National Intelligence Service, the Security Police, and the Department of Military Intelligence. According to defense attache reporting, this unit works closely with the Working Committee and the full SSC. It also sets priorities for the collection of intelligence.

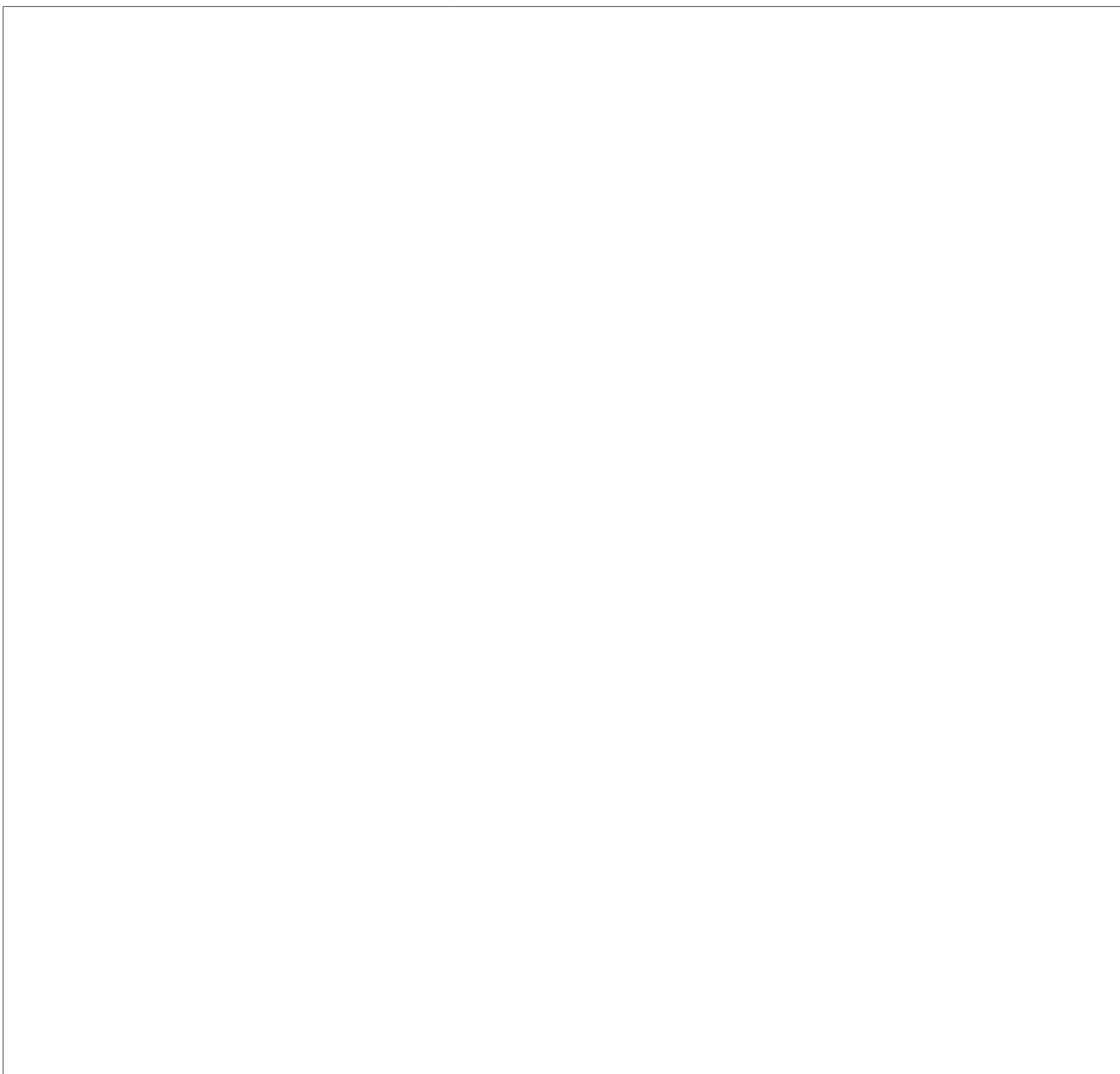
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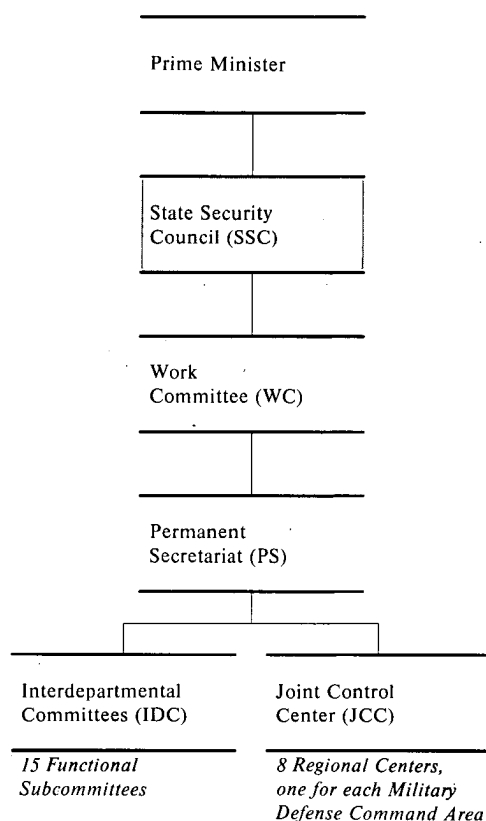


- The Strategic Communications Branch, according to reporting from the defense attache office, is concerned with the analysis of information on regional transportation and communications networks.
- The Administrative Branch is concerned with managing the Secretariat.

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South Africa National Security Management System



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Interdepartmental Committees. Also under the aegis of the Council are 15 interdepartmental committees (IDCs) that work to coordinate governmentwide responses to foreign and domestic security questions. The IDCs cover a wide spectrum of political, economic, and social issues. They include the committees for political action, economic coordination, science and technology, manpower, transportation, cultural matters, telecommunications, and electrical supply. Composed of military officers and civil servants, as well as representatives from public corporations, the IDCs are designed to coordinate public-sector activities in what Minister of Defense Magnus Malan described in an article on security policy as "areas of common interest in the national security field which affect more than one government department."

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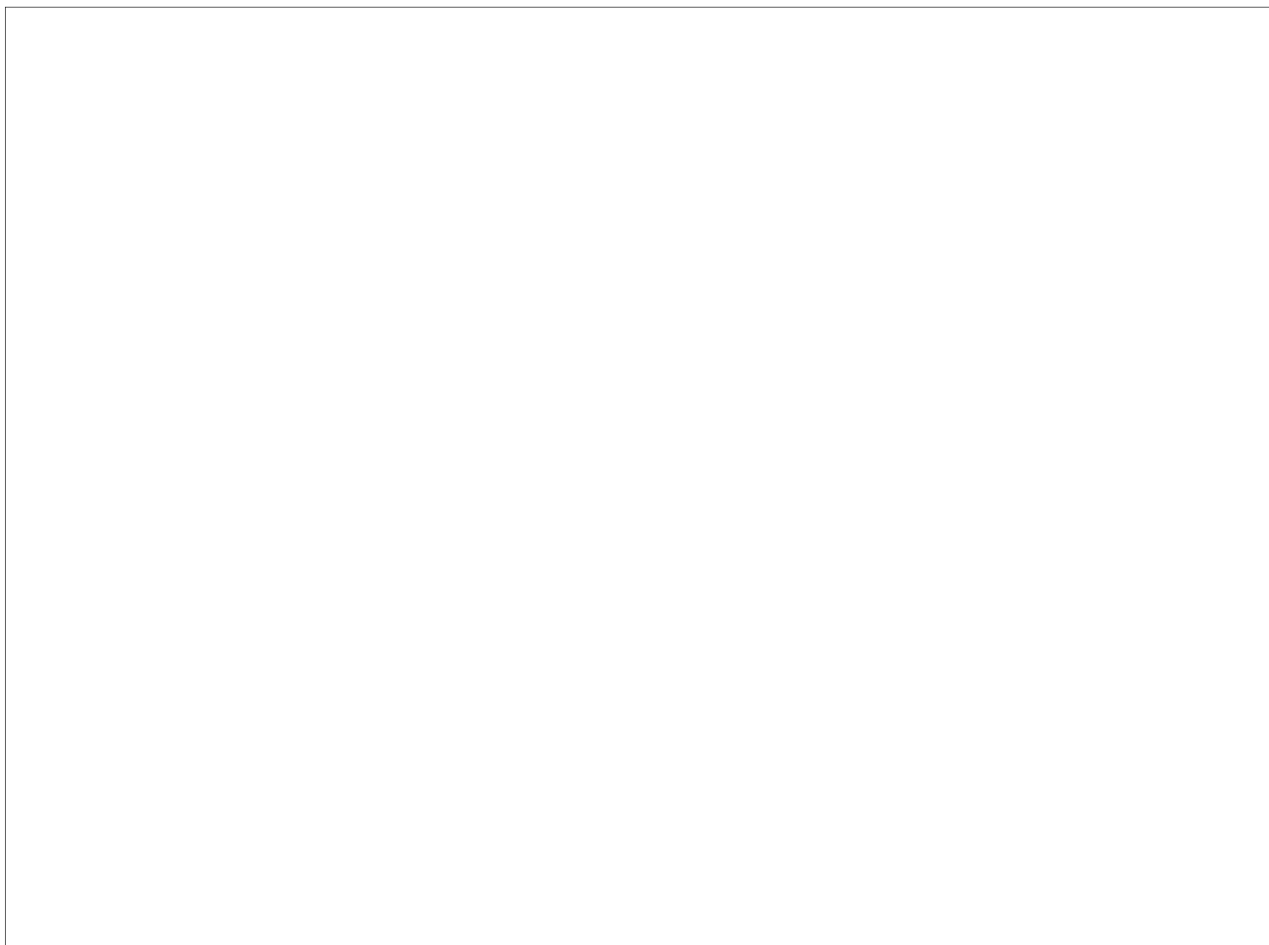
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Joint Management Centers (JMCs). The final component of the State Security Council network is a series of joint management centers that coordinate local security responsibilities of the police, the military, and other public services. There are nine JMCs that serve different geographical areas of South Africa; their demarcation coincides with the area commands (military districts) of the South African Defense Force (SADF). According to the 1982 Ministry of Defense White Paper, the JMCs developed by 1982 into "efficient bodies of the State Security Management System." The White Paper cited several examples of close coordination generated and supervised by the JMCs between military and civilian authorities:

- In early 1981, the Air Force and Army provided emergency aid during flood disasters in Cape Province.

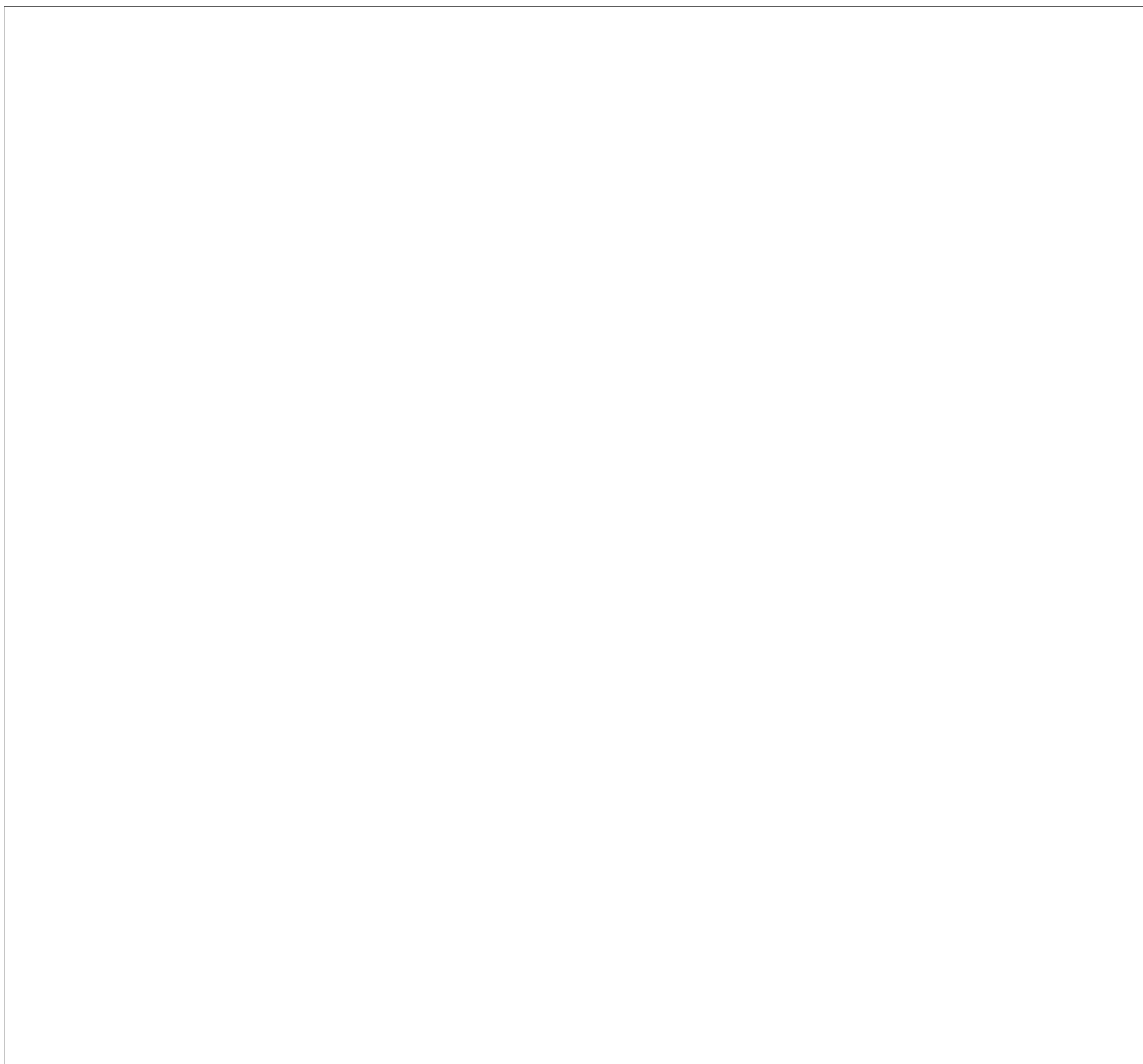
- In 1980 and 1981, the Army assisted the police by establishing 22 cordon operations, 10 sweep and search operations, and 632 roadblocks. During the same period, the Air Force provided 2,136 hours of flight support to the police.
- In 1980 and 1981, the South African Navy developed a counterinsurgency role to counter terrorist attacks against major ports. The Navy, according to the report, coordinated its efforts through the JMC with police and civil authorities in Cape Province and Natal.

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The Role of the Military

Over the past few years, observers of the South African scene have debated the relative influence of the military and civilians in the formulation of foreign and national security policies. Conventional wisdom has held that under Botha the military has been the dominant player in the decisionmaking process.

Given developments in southern Africa over the past two years, this conclusion is understandable. Pretoria's hawkish policies toward its neighbors have brought the SADF and the Department of Military

Intelligence into the limelight.¹ We agree that the military has increased its influence under Botha and has an important say in decisions. Nevertheless, we believe that it is Botha, along with senior National Party leaders—such as Minister of Foreign Affairs Pik Botha, Minister of Law and Order Louis Le

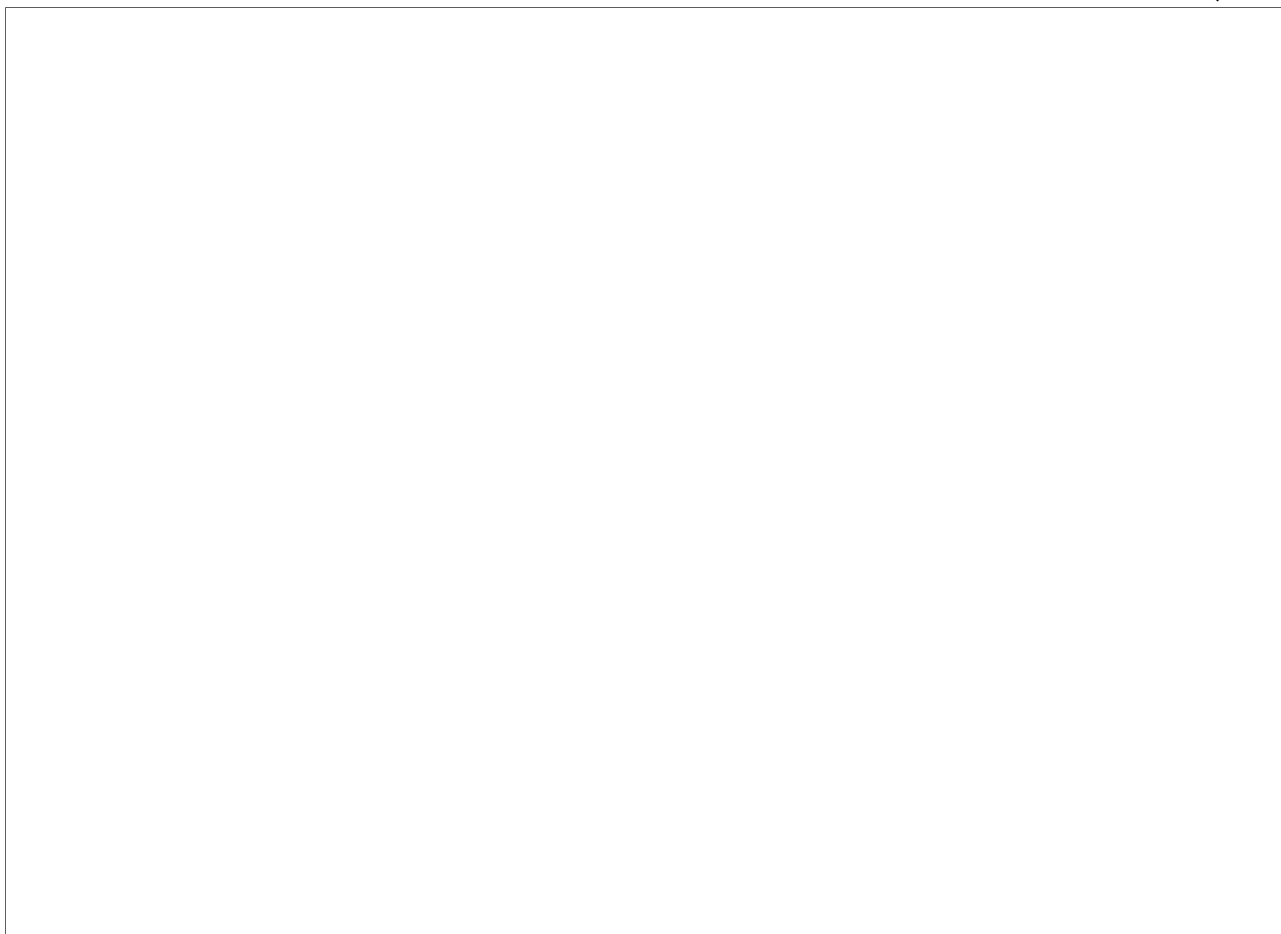


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Grange, and Minister of Justice H. J. Coetsee, who serve on the State Security Council—who determine policy, and that the debate leading to these decisions takes place to a considerable extent within the SSC framework. [redacted]

A striking example was the decision to seek a rapprochement with Mozambique, which led to the non-aggression pact of March 1984. The SSC, which had previously approved paramilitary operations against the Mozambican Government, ordered the development of new economic ties with Maputo, the supply of food to drought-ravaged provinces, and the availability of a \$40 million line of credit. Sources of the US Embassy also report that Botha ordered the South African military to break off all contact with Mozambican insurgents, and that the guerrilla units not be allowed sanctuary in South Africa. [redacted]

[redacted]
[redacted] this new policy was initially opposed by the military elements of the SSC. The military, [redacted]
[redacted] believed not only that the insurgents had a chance to defeat the Marxist Mozambican government, but that Maputo could not prevent the guerrillas of the African National Congress from continuing to conduct paramilitary operations against South Africa from Mozambican territory as called for in the bilateral accord. [redacted]

Similarly, the decision to initiate in March the disengagement of South African forces from southern Angola probably had only lukewarm support from the military. At each stage of the withdrawal, Botha and

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the SSC overruled military leaders who argued that the disengagement should be delayed because of SWAPO activity in the areas vacated by the South Africans. []

We believe that there are no fundamental differences on strategic objectives among Botha's inner circle of advisers. In our judgment, all of Botha's senior policy-makers—military and civilian—share a perception of the "total onslaught" endangering South Africa, as well as a need for a "total strategy" to meet the threat. The differences within the inner circle, in our view, center on the means by which to maintain the security of a white-ruled South Africa, not on that premise itself. []

Outlook and Implications

The development of the State Security Council system has coincided with a period of renewed self-confidence in Pretoria. Apart from the direction P. W. Botha has given South African security policy, the SSC has enabled South Africa to conduct a flexible regional policy. The ability of Pretoria to shift from confrontation to rapprochement with Mozambique is a prime example of this flexibility. []

Although Botha was able to change directions when seeking a nonaggression pact with Mozambique, the national security management system allows him to revert—as quickly—to more aggressive tactics. Pretoria clearly has the capacity to react to US diplomatic initiatives in the region, and can either support or frustrate them by policies coordinated in the State Security Council. []

We expect no major changes in South Africa's decisionmaking structure while Botha serves as chief executive. The system has worked well for him. It has ensured coordination in the execution of policy, and has enabled Pretoria to orchestrate security policies that have enhanced South Africa's prestige abroad, while increasing the self-confidence of white South Africans. []

South Africa is clearly on a roll; the trip by P. W. Botha to Western Europe in June marked the first such visit by a South African prime minister since the National Party came to power in 1948. Moreover, the policies that have emanated from the SSC have proved popular among white South Africans, helping to form a political consensus among Afrikaners and English speakers alike that has indirectly benefited Botha's program of limited constitutional reform. In 1982, a poll conducted by a South African social science institute showed that more than 85 percent of the whites supported Botha's aggressive regional policy, while a newspaper survey taken in April 1984 showed that over 90 percent of the electorate supported the agreement with Mozambique, including more than 80 percent of both English-speaking and Afrikaner voters. []

The new Constitution, which had the support of more than two-thirds of the white electorate in last year's referendum, will continue the trend toward the centralization of executive power that has characterized Botha's tenure when it comes into force this fall. The Constitution abandons the parliamentary system in favor of one in which the executive is a separate branch of government with a strong presidency. While Parliament has become less of a factor in decision-making since Botha became prime minister in 1978, the new executive dominated by a state president will be even less beholden to the new multiracial tricameral legislature. The principal implication of the new government structure, in which the State Security Council will continue to have a critical role, is that security decisionmaking will become the sole province of the executive. []

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